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ABSTRACT

Designed to supplement an 8th grade history course with the best updated research on the subject of slavery's origins, the lesson plan described in this paper has several objectives: (1) To augment the secondary textbooks, most of which either do not cover the beginnings of slavery, or cover it adequately; (2) To acquaint students with the historical origins of slavery and its impact especially concerning racism in America; (3) To show that slavery developed gradually while prejudice occurred quickly; (4) To help explain why black Africans were made slaves and the origins of American racism; (5) To argue strongly against slavery and racism; and (6) To make better citizens of students. Also included are notes, suggested and selected bibliographies, and nine pages of lecture-handouts and worksheets. (TRS)

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THE ORIGINS OF SLAVERY AND RACISM:
A SUPPLEMENT TO CURE WHAT TEXTBOOKS DO NOT SAY

BY

WESTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

MSD WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP, MARION COUNTY

APRIL 1985

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"Mr. Motz," said the student,

"Yes, Roy," responded the teacher.

"Why were blacks made slaves?" inquired Roy. "What factors led to their slavery?"

"That's a good question, and I don't know," Mr. Motz responded as he looked at the floor. "What does the textbook say?"

Offered a chance to criticize the centerpiece for almost every course, Roy stated, "It said nothing as to why--it said simply that black Africans were made slaves. If not the textbook, then where can a person go to begin finding answers?"

A concrete presentation of the origins of slavery and racism in school textbooks has improved little in recent years. The above exchange took place in the Fall of 1969 in my junior U.S. history class. I did not get the rudiments of an answer to my question until college. In my professional judgment, that is far too late. I have developed the following lesson[1] from the strong personal and professional reasons accumulated over a lifetime.

The origins of slavery and racism in America are a crucial topic to be explored for the legacy of these evils persists to this day. Mankind must avoid the pit of racism and similar ills. To know the reasons why slavery and racism unfolded can protect us and make us more unlikely to fall into the pit occupied by the Ku Klux Klan and other racists. For students to explore and comprehend the faulted logic, the corruption of faith, and the misuse of ethnocentrism by those who brought slavery to our land is to argue against the return of slavery and the continuance of prejudice and racism today.

Many texts are meager in their treatment of the beginning of slavery and racism. I have not found a handful that tell even part of the full story; and these are written in an often disjointed way. Many books do not even discuss an essential point: that Europeans first used the native American Indians as laborers.

Many books would have students conclude black Africans were made slaves by mere chance and from the time of their first arrival. My lesson is designed to augment textbooks and answer the question I posed in 1969, using the best and the latest historical research.

I am convinced that to know the wellsprings from which slavery and racism flow, is to know the means to control, if not eliminate them. The origins of slavery is one of the vital topics in American history, and provides information necessary for people to understand the reasons for slavery, and for the racism that still persists today. Students should also realize slavery and racism ensued from factors such as religion and ethnocentrism which can also be positive forces in human experience. These factors were used and perverted by white Europeans degrading those who were different. White Europeans saw black Africans as different and that perception of differences, along with slavery, worked to "hustle the Negro down the road to complete degredation."[2]

Among texts used at the middle school level, I have found few that do even an adequate job on the birth of slavery and racism. The text my school system used the past six years created some false impressions, was misleading, and lacked full explanation on many points. The discourse is broken up over the textbook and thereby inhibits cohesive instruction and comprehension by the student.[3]

The same book is commendable in noting the first black Africans brought to America were indentured servants, not slaves. Many textbooks omit that critical fact in the story of slavery. The implication to students is that black Africans were slaves from the beginning. Because this is not the case, it is imperative to explain why and how slavery was forced upon black Africans over the period of the 1600's.

Of the approximately thirty textbooks I have reviewed, possibly a half-dozen were even satisfactory on this far-reaching subject.[4] The errors in these books are largely errors of omission, although some are the result of editorial choice.

I doubt anyone would deny the importance of slavery and racism in America's history. Nevertheless, many books used in the classroom have condemned it to the scrap heap of historic trivia. Not every topic in history can be discussed thoroughly in a textbook. However, it is my contention that the origin of slavery and racism must be discussed as one of the important subjects in America's story, thus the reason for this lesson.

The format of this lesson is guided-design: a fill-in-the-blank outline lecture handout. This allows me to reach lower ability students. The lesson can be conducted in 1-2 days, a week, or longer. That can be determined by the teacher and students according to interest, time, discussion and the textbook being augmented.

Discussion is primary to this lesson. During discussion time can be made to deal with vocabulary, feelings of the students, and to analyze points raised. The introduction of higher level vocabulary such as: ethnocentrism, miscegenation, negar, and fornication can be backed up with methodology that allows the students to deal with it at their ability level and reinforces the terms. These kinds of terms are not avoided in my class. I tell the students they are "39 cent words"; they look and sound impressive--however they can be easily bought and used by the students. In short, I believe students at almost any level can accomodate such terms if given a background to use and comprehend them.

Discussion creates time to deal with feelings. There are controversial and powerful ideas in this lesson; especially when coupled with analogies to today. Time must be made to deal with student reactions to these ideas. My school district has a black population over 30 percent; and there are other groups that make our system still more diverse. For the black students, this lesson strikes close to home; and other students may have concerns with aspects of religion, symbolic terms, ethnocentrism and today's society raised in the lesson.

Time must be allotted to delve. By developing and sharing feelings

regarding religion, students will see its role in the beginnings of American slavery and racism. Many students feel deeply the noble aspects of religion and will need time to analyze how evil could spring forth from people who profess the same faith.

Classroom teachers and textbook authors must stay current on historiography. They must offer students and readers a bibliography for further study. Simply put--all must read! The turgid nature in which so many textbooks are written turns students off to reading. Whereas most courses have a basic text, students are bombarded with dull writing. Many students react with praise to discover there actually are well written books on history awaiting them. Therefore another purpose of this lesson is to motivate others to read about slavery and racism.

Much of my lesson is based on Winthrop D. Jordan's book, WHITE OVER BLACK: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEGRO, 1550-1812, (1968). As well, my lesson takes time to present and review briefly various books on the subjects of slavery and racism. Attached is an annotated bibliography of some of those books.[5]

A recent and particularly useful book on aspects of the BIBLE and slavery is SLAVERY SABBATH WAR AND WOMEN, by Willard M. Swartley, (1983). His book demonstrates that the BIBLE argues as both defense and prosecutor of slavery. He points out that to state that the BIBLE attests to one side (pro or con) on slavery is deceiving. Swartley's chapter on slavery is presented in the form of a debate on slavery in the 1850's and 1860's. He uses personalities of the period who quote from the BIBLE. It is as if you, the reader, were present in the lecture hall and that this divisive issue could be solved by force of words and not by force of arms in civil war.

Most textbooks do a credible job on three basic points on slavery:

(1) The Spanish brought black Africans to America. Few books are clear as to where they were transported first: to what became the United States, or another part of Spain's empire. Because most students study slavery in U.S. history, they are misled to conclude the first

blacks were delivered to the area of the future United States.

(2) The first black Africans delivered to America arrived in 1619 at Jamestown, Virginia. Few texts note the Portuguese brought them or that they were used as trade items for repair materials. Likewise, point one would lead students to believe the Spanish brought these people to Jamestown; unless the book truthfully notes the Africans were brought by the Portuguese.

(3) Black Africans were conducted to America to fulfill the desparate need for workers. Not all books cite that they were ferried in as indentured servants and not slaves. Some texts mistakenly call them slaves the first time they discuss their presence in America.

After these fairly reliable points are made, other problems crop into the textbook accounts. Continued use of unreliable texts will allow misleading ideas to spring forth and accurate knowledge may be choked out by errors and omissions. Additionally, few books discuss the role of prejudice, ethnocentrism, preconceived ideas in the minds of the Europeans, the need for control of forced-labor, and slavery's gradual development. I fear these are editorial choices made on the basis of textbook length rather than historical accuracy.

My lesson sets forth the following points which are well established in the most recent research and best so by Jordan:

(1) Slavery evolved gradually, inconsistently over the course of the 1600's in America. Black Africans were not made slaves once they debarked onto Virginia's shores albeit in chains. The first documented case resembling slavery was the fascinating story of John Punch in 1640. His lifetime service resulted from -- his attempt to flee his indenture; and very likely from his black skin. Here it is critical to note that the two white indentured servants who ran away with Punch were sentenced to only added years of service. No mention was made as to why Punch suffered a more severe sentence; except the judge noted he was "a Negro." By implication, John Punch's sentence was based upon prejudice, inasmuch as for a violation of his contract.

(2) Like the proverbial chicken and the egg, it is difficult to tell which came first: slavery or prejudice. Did slavery produce prejudice toward the Negro? Or, did prejudice cause whites to enslave Negroes? Jordan argues, convincingly, that historic evidence and the lack of such shows that "both worked hand-in-hand to debase the Negro."

(3) Slavery arose from what the colonial landowners determined was a need for labor. After first trying America's Indians, they tried indentured servants. Then the landowners settled upon black Africans as slave laborers for many reasons. Only a few textbooks get the sequence down properly; very few explain the reasons why fully.

(4) Slavery grew from differences seen by whites, between themselves and the black Africans. These perceived differences were seen, in part, through the eye of prejudice. For example, a 1644 Maryland law said Negro women may do field work. Nothing was said of white indentured women doing the same work.[6]

Prior ideas existed in the minds of Europeans before their first contact with black Africans and these preconceived ideas were based--in part--upon symbols derived from the BIBLE and other sources. They came from lessons taught in the BIBLE: Abraham's possession of slaves, the story of Noah condemning his son, Shem, to slavery, and the story of Cain and Abel, among a few. Another source of these ideas is the symbolic use of terms like black and white, light and darkness in the BIBLE and other sources. Many Europeans, justifying slavery used kangaroo logic derived from these prior ideas and other sources to debase black Africans to a lesser position than themselves. Thus, upon their first contact with people of different cultures and appearance, they found them to be less, unequal. The faulted logic went something like this: black is a symbol for evil and bad. A black man must be evil, bad, or at least low. Because of his low nature, he can be enslaved without violation of humanity.

Many prior ideas were based also on Shakespeare and his misunderstood work, OTHELLO. Othello was misjudged much like Archie Bunker and the show "All in the Family." Many people who saw OTHELLO in Shakespeare's day agreed with the prejudice, bigotry, and slander espoused by Iago; just as people centuries later agreed with the bigoted ideas of Archie Bunker.[7] Students are impressed to realize Shakespeare (literature) and Archie Bunker (television) have an impact on society and history and are not merely vehicles of entertainment.

(5) Another reason for slavery's development was ethnocentrism. This is a natural belief in the good in one's self, ethnic group, or race. In its worst form, it is a belief in the superiority of one's group. Through a worst-case scenario white Europeans enslaved black Africans by, in part, engaging in ethnocentrism. Europeans came to feel Africans to be less than themselves. By viewing the black Africans as deficient, it was easier for the white European to make those people slaves. This was prejudice and ethnocentrism at work at their most base level. Textbooks seldom discuss these points.

Ethnocentrism and preconceived ideas were deprecating of the Negro and mutually reinforcing; as a consequence they helped slavery and racism grow. When Europeans combined these ideas with prejudice, and the demand for labor, it was as if they had little control: they were heading toward the slippery slope of enslavement. In typical ethnocentric justification and religious bigotry promoting slavery, many who called themselves Christians said of the black Africans, "they ain't decent Christians." Books pass over this swiftly; a few do so without explanation, simply using one word to explain this cause of slavery, "prejudice."

Given the need for workers of the labor-intensive crops, landowners determined upon the equal need to control those forced to work. The advent of slave laws and finally the slave codes satisfied this void. These laws materialized from the first case law on the matter in 1640 to the first codified slave laws

in Virginia in 1705. Over those sixty-five years. slavery was legally justified and forced upon blacks just as the chains used to bind them.

A mere handful of books note the twin characteristics of the hideous American slave system: lifetime service and inherited status for the children of slaves. Making the children slaves guaranteed the supply of forced labor would never run out. My lesson corrects these critical omissions from textbooks. Likewise, comparisons need to be made to show how the system of slavery that festered in America was more cruel than others before it; not only for the obvious reasons. Students, likewise, need to know that black Africans participated in the American slave system through the slave trade. They controlled it through the supply of victims.

I wish to fight racism. This lesson offers a chance to do so. I fight out of personal and professional convictions.

My personal experiences--most especially with minority students--affirms for me their full and equal partnership with me in life.

To know the causes of slavery and racism is to know defenses against advocates of those causes today. I wish to promote that in my lesson.

I wish to augment textbooks that for reasons of coverage, content, editing, or choice ignore or cover incompletely the birth of slavery and racism in America.

I wish to motivate students and teachers to read one of the most gripping stories in America's history: slavery and racism. I wish to inspire reading from sources that are far more stimulating than the often bland textbooks used in America's classrooms.

My greatest purpose in this lesson and article is to teach!

NOTES

[1]See the attached classroom lesson that follows. It is complete with a list of important dates on the origins of slavery and racism and vocabulary.

[2]Winthrop D. Jordan, WHITE OVER BLACK: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEGRO, 1550-1812, New York, W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1968, p. 80. See also my lesson p. 1 and following pages.

[3]Harold H. Eibling, et al, TWO CENTURIES OF PROGRESS, second edition, River Forest, Illinois, Laidlaw Brothers, 1977, pps. 38, 64. On page 38 the text states, "The Indians had most of their land taken away. They were put to work on the large farms owned by the Spaniards and the Spaniards also brought Africans to the New World to work as slaves." This discussion leads students to believe the Indians were not used as slaves. Second, it does not make clear to what parts of the Spanish empire Africans were transshipped as "slaves." Thus, the discourse is misleading and lacking in explanation.

The history of slavery is resumed in Chapter 3 on page 64. This disjointed discussion can make for poor insight and comprehension by students; whereas this 28 page gap may be as much as a month in time at grade 8. On page 64, a "teacher note" states the correct chronology and condition of Africans (indentured servants) upon arriving in America in 1619. This fact should have been stated openly in the student's reading. Otherwise, on the page, the text does an admirable job noting the economics involved in the rise of slavery (the need for labor).

[4]The following are a few of those textbooks that do a somewhat satisfactory job on the origins of slavery: Richard A. Bartlett, et al, FREEDOM'S TRAIL, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979, pps. 48, 51, 62, 71, 77, 79, 86, 89; Henry N. Drewry, et al, AMERICA IS, Columbus, Ohio, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1984, pps. 84-89; Harold H. Eibling, et al, TWO CENTURIES OF PROGRESS, pps. 38, 64; John A. Garraty, AMERICAN HISTORY, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982, pps. 68-69, 71; Norman K. Risjord, A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES TO 1877, New York, Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1983, pps. 51-58; Leonard C. Wood, et al, AMERICA: ITS PEOPLE AND VALUES, Heritage edition, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985, pps. 69, 101-102, 111-112, 113. Critical annotations appear in a separate bibliography for these middle school level textbooks.

[5]A selected number of readings on the origins of slavery racism, and other aspects of the same can be found in the Bibliography of Suggested Readings.

[6]Another example of white prejudice toward the Negro was the penalties exacted against them for miscegenation and fornication; and most especially against whites for engaging in such "with a Negro." See Jordan, in re the case of Hugh Davis, p. 78, and pps. 78-80, 136-138, 139-140, 144, 475. See my lesson pps. 4-5.

[7]A. Hanso, "Can Archie Bunker Give Bigotry a Bad Name?," New York TIMES MAGAZINE, March 12, 1972, pps. 32-33ff. See my lesson p. 2.

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SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE ORIGINS OF SLAVERY AND RACISM

Aitken, Hugh, G.J., editor, DID SLAVERY PAY?: READINGS IN THE ECONOMICS OF BLACK SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971. A great source for teachers. Probably a bit advanced for most secondary students.

Berlin, Ira, SLAVES WITHOUT MASTERS: THE FREE NEGRO IN THE ANTE-BELLUM SOUTH. New york, Vintage Books, Random House, 1974. A great source for teachers on the lives of free blacks in the South before the Civil War. Important, because not all blacks were slaves--nevertheless, the lives of those free was not "free."

Blassingame, John W., THE SLAVE COMMUNITY: PLANTATION LIFE IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH, New York, Oxford University Press, 1972. Tremendous! Vividly points out that slaves developed their own culture system within the context of slavery and many masters respected it and would not interfere in it.

Curtin, Philip D., THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE: A CENSUS, Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1969. Laden with numbers, charts, and tables that are quite useful to the classroom teachers. Not the most readable.

David, Paul A., et al, RECKONING WITH SLAVERY: A CRITICAL STUDY IN THE QUANTITATIVE HISTORY OF AMERICAN NEGRO SLAVERY, New York, Oxford University Press, 1976. A book for teachers. Written in reaction to the quantitative study on the profitablity of slavery by Fogel and Engerman, TIME ON A CROSS, this book is a great look into quantitative-analysis used in history: one must be careful of the data used as this book points out. Along with DID SLAVERY PAY?, it makes for a good commentary on the question, "Would slavery have died without the Civil War?"

Davidson, Basil, THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE: PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY 1450-1850, Boston, Atlantic Monthly Press, Little, Brown and Co., 1961. Originally published as BLACK MOTHER, this is a more readable book over Curtin's THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE. Some secondary students could handle it.

Douglass, Frederick, NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS: AN AMERICAN SLAVE, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, Dolphin Books, Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1963. A book for all from the point of view of an eye-witness to slavery--and one of America's greatest people.

Fox, Paula, THE SLAVE DANCER, New York, Dell Publishing Co., 1973. A fictional account of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its impact on both slave and trader. Great for all. Only 127 pages; it could be easily incorporated into a class.

Haley, Alex, ROOTS, New York, Dell Publishing Co., 1974. We've all seen the film; now read the book. Students enjoy it as much as the film. A great resource that makes you feel what slavery was like from capture, to breaking-in, to the separation of families.

Franklin, John Hope, FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM: A HISTORY OF NEGRO AMERICANS, fourth edition, New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1974. Written by one of America's greatest professors. A teacher could not ask for a single source better than this. It traces Negro Americans from Africa's ancient kingdoms to the present.

Jordan, Winthrop D., THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN: THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES, New York, Oxford University Press, 1974. A cropped-down version of WHITE OVER BLACK to allow for use in a single semester course that some find the better secondary students can read.

Jordan, Winthrop D., WHITE OVER BLACK: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEGRO, 1550-1812, New York, W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1968. The original source for many ideas in my lesson. A pioneering study, well documented. Page 80 presents one of the real "kickers" as regards white responsibility for slavery. What he inplies about white attitudes on race does not bode well for racial harmony in America.

Litwack, Leon F., NORTH OF SLAVERY: THE NEGRO IN THE FREE STATES, 1790-1860, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1961. For those of us mistakenly teaching that there were no slaves in the North in the years prior to the Civil War, this book, along with Franklin's general study will correct that. There were a handful of slaves in the North still, by 1861. Of those non-slaves in the North, many were in a "slave-like" condition; yet they held another name: freemen.

Quarles, Benjamin, THE NEGRO IN THE MAKING OF AMERICA, rev. ed., New York, Collier Books, MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1969. Not as readable as Franklin's book; nevertheless a valuable general history. A great bibliography.

Stampp, Kenneth, M., THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION: SLAVERY IN THE ANTE-BELLUM SOUTH, New York, Vintage Books, Random House, 1956. Despite all the schools of thought on slavery: from sambo to slave community, most return to Stampp's assessment. Some good secondary students can and should read it. All teachers of American history must read it!

Swartley, Willard M., SLAVERY SABBATH WAR AND WOMEN, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, Herald Press, 1983, pps. 31-64. A stimulating book on more than the subject of slavery. Swartley shows clearly the BIBLE can be used to argue both for and against slavery. He states that to say the BIBLE argues one way is a misrepresentation of scripture. The chapter on slavery is fascinatingly presented as a debate between pro and anti-slavery forces of the 1850's and 1860's.

Wade, Richard C., SLAVERY IN THE CITIES: THE SOUTH 1820-1860, New York, Oxford University Press, 1964. A different look at slavery--its urbanization. Before his untimely death, Wade was leading some to believe slavery would have lived on--had it not been for the Civil War--in the cities and factories of the South. The essays by Starobin conclude the same.

Washington, Booker T., UP FROM SLAVERY, New York, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1971. Another testimonial on slavery by one who experienced it. Great for students as it is just over 120 pages. Please caution the students that Washington lived in a time of strict segregation and Jim Crow laws. Moreover, he accepted it. However, if you put the book into the context of the times it was composed and note that today things are different, it serves a useful purpose as an eyewitness account on slavery and the post-Civil War years.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL TEXTBOOKS

Bartlett, Richard A., et al, FREEDOM'S TRAIL, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979, pps. 48, 51, 62, 71, 77, 79, 86, 89. This is one of the better textbooks on the origins of slavery. It is more extensive in noting the contributing factors and the chronology. It lacks some explanation of key points.

Drewry, Henry N., et al, AMERICA IS, Columbus, Ohio, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1984, pps. 84-89. This text like the one above does note that there was slavery practiced in Africa before that in America. Its biggest drawback is the lack of exposition on aspects in the development of slavery. It has zero on the fact that American Indians were the first slaves; the role of religion, or prejudice.

Eibling, Harold H., et al, TWO CENTURIES OF PROGRESS, second edition, River Forest, Illinois, Laidlaw Brothers, 1977, pps. 38, 64. Adequate on only the mere basics of slavery. Entirely too brief to allow for explanation. Discusses the rise of slavery as resulting only from the need for workers. Other aspects of slavery: family, culture, resistance are noted but in a fragmented coverage.

Garraty, John A., AMERICAN HISTORY, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982, pps. 68-69. This book does cite the movement from using Indians to indentures to black Africans. It fails to note that the first blacks were indentured servants.

Risjord, Norman K., A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES TO 1877, New York, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1983, pps. 51-58. The advantage here is that Risjord uses a cohesive few pages to make his points; he then picks up the continuing story on slavery in its other forms later. The basic chronology and facts are presented. He does note that the first blacks to come to America were freemen--often fellow explorers of the Spanish. He states clearly that the first black Africans brought to Jamestown were not made slaves. He cites the need for workers as a cause of slavery while failing to note the other factors for its rise.

Wood, Leonard C., et al, AMERICA: ITS PEOPLE AND VALUES, Heritage edition, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985, pps. 69, 101-102, 111-113, others. Well written. One of the best on the subject along with Freedom's Trail and A History of the United States to 1877. Cites the basic chronology and factors. Attempts to deal with the role of prejudice in the rise of slavery.

Dear Parents and Students:

PLEASE READ THROUGH THE ATTACHED LECTURE-HANDOUT ON THE "ORIGINS OF NEGRO SLAVERY."

I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERED OPINIONS.

MY INTENTION IS TO SUPPLEMENT THE 8TH GRADE HISTORY COURSE WITH THE BEST RESEARCH ON THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY'S ORIGINS, TO DATE. IN MY TEACHING CAREER I HAVE FOUND FEW SECONDARY LEVEL TEXTBOOKS (ALMOST NONE) THAT COVER THE SUBJECT. FEWER BOOKS STILL DO AN ADEQUATE JOB IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO COVER IT.

MY OBJECTIVE IS TO ACQUAINT THE STUDENTS WITH THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF SLAVERY OF NEGROES AND THE IMPACT OF THAT SLAVERY--ESPECIALLY CONCERNING RACISM IN AMERICA. ANOTHER OBJECTIVE IS TO SHOW THAT SLAVERY DEVELOPED GRADUALLY, WHILE PREJUDICE OCCURRED QUICKLY.

AS A RESOURCE I AM USING WINTHROP JORDAN'S BOOK, WHITE OVER BLACK, (1968). IN MY LECTURE-HANDOUT I QUOTE, AS DOES JORDAN, FROM THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS--USING THEIR VERY WORDS.

I BELIEVE THIS LESSON CAN HELP EXPLAIN WHY BLACK AFRICANS WERE MADE SLAVES, AND THE ORIGINS OF RACISM IN AMERICA.

I BELIEVE THIS LESSON ARGUES STRONGLY--AS WILL MY OWN COMMENTS--AGAINST SLAVERY AND RACISM.

I BELIEVE THIS LESSON WILL MAKE BETTER CITIZENS OF OUR STUDENTS.

EXPRESSIONS OF YOUR OPINIONS AND CONCERNS ON THIS SUBJECT WILL BE APPRECIATED.

THANK YOU.

SINCERELY,

Roy L. Crumly

Roy L. Crumly

Origins of Slavery and Racism: Terms and dates for lecture handout.

Indentured servant	CHATTEL
slave	labor
racism	"badge of slavery"
discrimination	Jamestown
apartheid	1619
imply	1640
inherent	1643
symbol	1644
descendents	1651
sevitude	1662
racial inferiority	1664
OTHELLO	1676
pseudo	1691
ethnocentrism	1705
"negars"	slave code
"nigers" "niggers"	
"guineas"	
twin characteristics of slavery	
lifetime service	
inherited status	
John Punch	
fornication	
miscegenation	
mulatto	
bastard	
interracial marriage	
DURANTE VITA	

Social Studies 8
The Origins of Negro Slavery and Racism

Name Key - Crumly
Revised, 1983

As a preface to this topic I want to say that although much of what you are about to discover did happen in history; many of the IDEAS about people mentioned here have been proven FALSE. Many of the ideas about the nature of racial groups are OFFENSIVE. The important thing to remember, in terms of history, is that these ideas were once HELD by some people and ACTED UPON because they thought them to be true. As a historian you must try to UNDERSTAND the BASIS of the ideas and WHY they were acted upon. I doubt that you will accept the ideas. Indeed, I think you will agree, they are WRONG!

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. When black Africans were first forcibly brought to America they were treated just as other settlers: including whites. Some were free and some were indentured servants. None were made slaves at the start. Within forty years of their forced arrival, though, slavery began creeping upon them. The question is WHY? The answer is unclear.

B. One question asked about slavery and its origins is: "Which came first slavery or prejudice?" Did man enslave his fellow man because he thought him low? (Prejudice) Or, because man enslaved his fellow man did he come to feel that man was low? (Slavery causing prejudice)

C. According to Winthrop Jordan, author of WHITE OVER BLACK: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEGRO, 1550-1812, (1968), Neither came first. They, slavery and prejudice, worked together "equally cause and effect, reacting upon each other...to hustle the black man down the road of racial degradation." (p. 80) *

1. Jordan bases his conclusion on: the evidence, and the lack of evidence.
2. Jordan implies that there may be something awful about white western man and his first contact with the black Africans.
3. Jordan has found there were prior ideas, concepts about the black Africans in the minds of the Europeans before their first contact with them.
4. In his book Jordan implies that there may be something inherent or naturally a part of the white society that is against the Negro.

II. English and European society had ideas before the first contact with the Africans.

A. Europeans had ideas about white and black as symbols for good and evil.

1. Stories, legends, and fables were told in which the color white was the symbol for good; black meant evil, bad. It can be summed up again with reference to the old saying about cowboy movies: "the good guys ..."

B. Religion --especially Judaism and Christianity--influenced ideas of white Europeans toward white and black. The Old and New Testaments are sources.

*
prejudice seemed to occur quickly

slavery developed gradually over time

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II. (continued)

B. (continued)

1. The story of Cain and Abel tells us the punishment for Cain's murder of Abel was to have the "mark of Cain" put on him by God. It was assumed by many people that this "mark" was a dark mark. Therefore, many supporters of slavery found, without proof, that Negroes were the bearers of a mark of Cain's sin: dark skin. A further look at this issue proves otherwise. The Bible does not suggest or imply that skin color was the mark God placed on Cain. Nor does the text of the Bible support the idea of "racial inferiority" by virtue of descent from Cain. Nor is there any evidence that descendents[1] Of Cain include Negroes--as interpreted by supporters of slavery.

2. The story of Noah and Ham is about Noah condemning his sons to be a slave Negroes are believed to be descendents of Ham. People in the South, prior to the Civil War, took this to mean Ham's descendents--Negroes--were condemned to slave ry. Let's examine this point.

Ham's descendents became kings. The curse was uttered by a drunken Noah and cannot be taken to justify the servitude of Negroes or anyone These beliefs of slavery's supporters were WRONG! But wrong as they were, they acted upon them.[2]

C. The famous author, William Shakespeare, tried to tell the people of England their ideas about people, different from themselves, were wrong in his play Othel His efforts had the opposite IMPACT!

1. His play was meant to make fun of ideas, attitudes on race.

2. Instead, his readers and viewers found OTHELLO reinforced their ideas on dark-skinned people and Negroes.

3. The modern-day version of OTHELLO is "All in the Family," "The Jeffe

D. European attitudes were influenced by stories told by Portuguese traders who made the first contact with the black Africans by Europeans.

III. The first European contact with black Africans was unfortunate for the Africa

A. Portuguese traders brought back stories of seeing apes at the same time and in the same area contact was made with the Africans.

B. Pseudo (false) theories of the mixing of Apes and Africans grew as a result.

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[1] The Bible Reader, page 16, 1969.

[2] The Bible Reader, page 21, 1969.

III. (continued)

C. Ethnocentrism played a role in attitudes in the first contact.

1. Ethnocentrism is the idea that you, your group, your race, is the best.

2. Given them were the prior ideas held by some before the first contact.

3. Now, with the first contact, the prior ideas were reinforced by ETHNOCENTRISM!

IV. Before there could be slavery, black slavery, in America, there had to be some way to bring the Africans to the Americas. The slave trade grew in answer to this need. The slave trade grew from two demands!

A. The slave trade grew from a demand for profits just as in any business. Slave trading was PROFITABLE!

B. The slave trade also grew from a demand for labor, workers. Using Indians did not work out and Indentured Servitude was growing unpopular.

C. Slavery did not develop quickly from these two demands. It took time for this labor system to develop into slavery. The idea of TIME, the gradual development, Jordan feels, supports his thesis of prejudice and slavery working together to debase the Negro in the minds of many.

V. The early years, 1619-1640, blacks were free of slavery.

A. The year 1619 is the first year we, today, know of black Africans in America. We have a written record telling us so.

1. Captain John Smith left a note telling us a ship came to Jamestown with a cargo that included 20 " Negors ." Note the spelling.

2. His comment notes, in his mind, a distinction and a separateness between whites and blacks. His word places black Africans in a low spot.

B. The years 1619 to 1640 show little evidence of slavery.

1. Blacks were indentured servants as were some whites.

2. Some Negroes gained their freedom as did many whites who were indentured servants. Some went on to acquire land and other property.

C. Closer to the year 1640 differences between white and black servants were being made. These differences hurt blacks!

D. By 1640 came the twin characteristics of slavery:

1. Lifetime service and

2. Inherited status for the children of slaves.

V. (continued)

E. The case of John Punch represents the change in the way whites and blacks were treated.

1. John Punch was an escaped, runaway indentured servant. He tried to run out on his indenture/contract/obligation to work.

2. He ran away with two other servants; both of whom were white.

3. The whites were sentenced to added years of service as indentures.

4. Punch was sentenced to serve for life.

F. In 1641, another black escapee was given no additional years of service. It was already assumed by the judge that he was serving for life.

VI. The years of the second stage of the development of slavery were from 1640 to 1660.

A. In this period came the appearance of laws for the first time making the distinctions between black and white servants legal.

B. In this period prices of black servants went higher because they served for life. Hence they cost more! Notice servants were now being sold!

C. Black females were made by law to do work normally done by men that white female servants were not made to do.

D. In 1643, Virginia authorized a tax on all Negroes, because they were regarded as property. Ergo, owners paid a property tax! No tax was paid by landowners using white servants.

1. Control was sought by the white landowners over the blacks. Blacks were denied the right to arms and some forms of travel. All changes emphasized the distinctions toward blacks and a new fear on the part of whites; the fear of revolt, uprising by the Negroes against this treatment.

E. In 1644 Maryland legally recognized that Negro women may do field work. Nothing was said of white women doing the same. The ideas were spreading!

F. Distinctions were also made on the basis of race and sex.

1. Interestingly, it is unknown--at first--if the concern was for fornication, illicit sex acts; or, was the concern for the sexual mixing of racial groups, miscegenation.

2. The case of Hugh Davis, a white man, shows the judge's concern was for both fornication and miscegenation because he ordered Davis whipped for "abuse of himself, (fornication), and "God," and for "lying with a Negro." (miscegenation)

VI. (cintinued)

F. Distinctions based on race and sex (continued)

3. Them were other cases:

a) In 1651 a lawsuit was filed in defense of a man accused of fathering a "black bastard." Here the concern obviously is for miscegenation

b) In 1676 laws were written against miscegenation. The concern obviously changed from fornication to one of the sexual mixing of races.

(1) An example of an anti - miscegenation law set forth was one calling for the owner of a slave mother to get the child resulting from the sexual union of two people, one of whom was a slave.

c) In 1662 Virginia law found "shame" in a Christian fornicating with a Negro, and fined the person "double" the usual amount.

d) In 1664 Maryland banned interracial marriages.

e) In 1691 Virginia acted against the "abominable issue"; the act itself and the child resulting from interracial marriages.

G. Winthrop Jordan finds the twin development of slavery and prejudice acted to debase the Negro. Jordan feels the debasement of the Negro by both, slavery and prejudice, went hand-in-hand with the legal reasons for slavery!

VII. The twin development of slavery and prejudice ensued from certain causes.

A. Slavery and prejudice came from a desire to satisfy a need for workers on the part of landowners.

1. After trying the native Indians, and then indentures, the decision was that black Africans would be that labor force.

B. The next questions were: How do you maintain/control and keep that labor force going, steady, visible and prevent a revolt?

1. The answers were: Place restrictions on blacks and, most importantly, latch (1) lifetime service on the Africans and (2) inherited status for the children of slaves.

C. These became the twin characteristics of slavery in America.

D. It would take time for these two conditions of slavery to develop.

1. Jordan feels this element of time supports his thesis of the twin development of slavery from slavery itself and prejudice.

E. Now the original question must be repeated: Which came first, prejudice or slavery? More importantly, the topic needs to be debated briefly.

1. If prejudice came before slavery the distinctions between the races and which race was deemed lowest would have had to come BEFORE lifetime service, a central characteristic of slavery.

2. If slavery came before prejudice, then lifetime service should have preceded the differences noted between the races.

3. The best answer says Jordan is that they worked together. Because elements of BOTH occurred simultaneously, not one before the other.

F. Elements of BOTH slavery and prejudice can be found BEFORE real slavery began and before the damning attitudes, ideas (prejudices) developed toward the Negro.

VIII. The Evolution of slavery took time: (The period 1660 to 1705)

A. In 1664 Maryland passed a law requiring Negroes to serve as workers Durante Vita, "for life," or "throughout life."

B. By 1690 a number of laws defined who were slaves and placed controls on slaves. This means slavery was being encoded into written law.

1. In 1669 Virginia law spoke of the rights of owners concerning their chattel slaves. A chattel is a person who is owned in entirety. The person is owned not only for their labor, their very person is owned. The owner can do as they please with the person.

2. The same law recognized the owner could, and would use force to control slaves; but that he would not purposely kill a slave. This was built-in excuse, within the law, for the owner if the slave died.

3. This admitted that death may result from the treatment of slaves by owners. But noticeably, owners were not liable for the death. The law excused it!

C. By 1705 slavery was so well established that slave codes were created because so many laws had been passed regarding blacks and slavery.

D. The slave codes said slavery was legal and that blacks were slaves.

E. The slave codes noted that mulattos, or people of white/black parentage, were slaves if the mother was a slave and they carried the "badge of slavery"--dark skin.

VIII. (continued)

F. Slavery was now set up by 1705 and it strengthened the existing prejudice against the Negro: People began to think Negroes were low because they were slaves.

G. Slavery and prejudice soon began to work together to prop up slavery. Slavery was justified by the badge of color.

IX. Summary

We have seen how black slavery developed because of prejudice toward blacks and a need for workers that could be controlled. We have seen how prejudice helped generate slavery and how slavery helped perpetuate prejudice. Likewise, we have seen the following:

A. Some whites were prejudiced; some even before their first contact with Africans.

B. Slavery bolstered that prejudice toward blacks.

C. Slavery became the means chosen by landowners to control and maintain a labor force. Landowners decided they needed workers who could not run away, rebel

D. After trying Indians and indentures Africans were chosen to be those workers.

E. Slavery was viewed as the best way, according to the landowners, to control and keep a labor force.

F. Slavery and prejudice worked together to debase the Negro in the minds of many. It is a pitiful and sad legacy this country has yet to overcome.

The development of slavery

I. 1619-1640- Indentures and free blacks; no slavery

II. 1640-1660- Distinctions made between whites, blacks and they hurt blacks.

III. 1660-1705- Laws appear defining differences; for control - first legal slavery

IV. 1705- Slave laws encoded. Slavery legalized. Blacks recognized as slaves.